

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2402

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October 5, 2020

Mr. Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: AT&T received \$283,000,000 to Expand Broadband in Rural Mississippi with no Proof

Dear Mr. Pai:

I am writing to you and your agency to express my serious concerns surrounding Mississippi's officials' claim that AT&T took \$238,000,000 to provide broadband service and pocketed the money. The Public Service Commission's investigation indicates examples of AT&T falsely claiming to have created new broadband service in places they have not, for people that are not receiving broadband service in places they have not.¹

According to data from the Universal Service Administrative Company, AT&T began reporting new service availability in nearly 4,400 locations scattered throughout the state in 2016 after receiving \$66.6 million from the initiative. By 2019, AT&T had received over \$230 million and reported service expansions to almost 160,000 locations, including many rural areas in Mississippi.²

As a rural state, Mississippi lacks access to broadband in much of the state. We must hold telecommunications companies accountable for their duplicitous actions. Moreover, the Clarion Ledger reported "the COVID-19 pandemic has only served to highlight the issue further. With many school districts opting for distance learning, along with companies and government agencies allowing employees to work from home, the need for fast and stable internet access is more vital than ever."³

As Congressman for the second congressional district of Mississippi, I would be remiss if I did not request a full and thorough investigation of these actions.

I look forward to your response and the results of the investigation, I urge and appreciate your immediate attention to the concerns referenced in this letter. I trust that you will take the actions necessary to mitigate these issues. Should you have any concerns, please contact Tyron James in my Washington, DC office at 202-225-5876 or via email at tyron.james@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

¹ Walter Einkel. *Mississippi officials say AT&T took \$283,000,000 to provide broadband and pocketed the money*. Daily Kos. <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2020/10/4/1983401/-Mississippi-officials-say-AT-T-took-283-000-000-to-provide-broadband-and-pocketed-the-money>. (2020).

² Keisha Rowe. *AT&T received \$283M to expand broadband in rural Mississippi. Now subpoena seeks proof to service*. Clarion Ledger. <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2020/09/15/att-under-fire-mississippi-rural-internet/346330001/>. (2020).

³ *Id.*